

What is claimed is:

1. A software-code configurable digital appliance for operating in a network, comprising:

    a storage component for storing different versions of at least one of firmware and application program code; and

    a processing component for:

        (a) selecting an appropriate version of said at least one of firmware and application program code depending on predetermined criteria relating to said network, and

        (b) loading the selected version into an operating component of said appliance to enable the appliance to operate in said network.

2. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 1, further comprising rudimentary program code in non-volatile memory that permits initialization of said processing component.

3. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a user interface operatively associated with said processing component for enabling a user to facilitate the selection of said appropriate version.

4. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 1, comprising a television settop box.

5. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 4 wherein said network comprises a subscription television system.

6. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 5 wherein said processing component selects said appropriate version in response to the particular subscription television system to which said appliance is connected.

7. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 6 wherein said different versions are stored in said storage component during manufacture of the appliance.

8. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 7 wherein said different versions are adapted to enable said settop to be deployed in any of a plurality of incompatible subscription television systems.

9. A digital appliance in accordance with claim 1, wherein at least one of said versions comprises code to enable at least rudimentary communication between said operating component and said network.

10. A method for configuring a digital appliance for operating in a network, comprising:

storing different versions of at least one of firmware and application program code in a memory of said digital appliance;

selecting an appropriate version of said at least one of firmware and application program code depending on predetermined criteria relating to said network, and

loading the selected version into an operating component of said appliance to enable the appliance to operate in said network.

11. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10 wherein said different versions are stored in said memory during manufacture of the appliance.

12. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10, further comprising activating rudimentary program code stored in non-volatile memory to initialize said digital appliance.

13. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10, further comprising presentation of a user interface for enabling a user to facilitate the selection of said appropriate version.

14. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10, wherein said appropriate version is selected in accordance with a particular subscription television system to which said appliance is connected.

15. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 14, wherein said different versions are adapted to enable said appliance to be deployed in any of a plurality of incompatible subscription television systems.

16. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10, wherein said different versions are adapted to enable said appliance to be deployed in any of a plurality of incompatible networks.

17. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 16, wherein said appropriate version is selected in response to the particular network to which said appliance is connected.

18. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10, wherein said operating component uses rudimentary default code if said network is not supported by the versions stored in said memory.

19. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 10, wherein said appropriate version comprises code to enable rudimentary communication between said operating component and said network.

30. A method for configuring a digital appliance in accordance with claim 19, comprising the further step of using said rudimentary communication to provide additional code to said operating component from said network, said additional code providing at least one of (i) more sophisticated communication and (ii) additional functionality for said appliance.